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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BONILLA).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 7, 2001.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY BONILLA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Isaias warns us, O Lord, unless we acknowledge You as Lord with living faith and lasting reverence we go adrift.

You have raised us and reared us; yet we have disowned You. Our house pets know their owners; our appetites know where to be fed; yet we do not know where to turn unless we truly belong to You.

As Your people, when we hear You call us: "a sinful nation, a people laden with wickedness, an evil race, corrupt children," shall we run away from You? Or toward You?

Is it You we fear and cannot face or is it the truth about ourselves and our children? Strengthen us that we may be drawn into the truth by You now and forever. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members to turn off cell phones when they enter the House Chamber.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will once again remind Members that cell phones are to be turned off in the House Chamber. Since the Chair's similar announcement a few moments ago, yet another cell phone has rung on the House floor.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. GRANGER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

S.J. Res. 6. Joint Resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the rule submitted by the Department of Labor under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, relating to ergonomics.

The message also announced that in accordance with Public Law 93-618, as amended by Public Law 100-418, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore and upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Committee on Finance, appoints the following Members of the Finance Committee as congressional advisers on trade policy and negotiations—

the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY);
the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH);
the Senator from Alaska (Mr. MURKOWSKI);
the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS); and
the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER).

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 10 one-minute speeches on each side.

SUPPORT RESEARCH FUNDING FOR NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, some people come into our lives and

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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quickly go. Some stay and leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never the same.

My constituents, Betti and Carlos Lidsky, are such people. Three of their four children, Isaac, Daria and Ilana, have an irreversible, incurable, degenerative eye disease known as retinitis pigmentosa which will eventually cause blindness. The Lidsky children are among the 6 million Americans who suffer from sight-debilitating diseases, and that number is poised to skyrocket as an additional 9 million Americans have presymptomatic signs of retinal degeneration.

I learned of these statistics through Betti and Carlos, who work tirelessly every day to raise awareness on these issues. They raise funds for research, and they work closely with researchers. They have testified before congressional committees, and this week they will be here in Congress lobbying us to make sure that each and every one of us works toward making blinding diseases extinct.

Betti, Carlos and their children, Isaac, Daria and Ilana, are the reason why we need to support research funding for the National Eye Institute. Promising clinical experiments are underway, and with our continued support, we can be sure that a cure is just around the bend.

PERMISSION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I have at the desk a personal request.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the leave of absence request.

The Clerk read as follows: Leave of absence requested for Mr. SKELTON of Missouri for tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman's written request will be granted.

There was no objection.

GENE DARNELL

(Mr. SKELTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow I will attend and participate in a funeral for a long-time friend from my home area, former sheriff Gene Darnell, one of Missouri's truly outstanding law enforcement officers.

It is with sadness that I report his loss, which is a great loss to our State.

VOTE AGAINST THE TAX-CUT PROPOSAL

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I also wish to add that were I here tomorrow, I would be speaking and voting against the tax cut proposal. It is important that we in this House protect our farmers, strengthen our armed forces, preserve Social Security and Medicare, and invest in our schools and eliminate the Federal debt.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned we are getting the cart before the horse. We

need a budget before we can make this important decision.

TAX CUTS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, unlike the Soviet Union or the old kings of Europe, this country has always believed in limited government; but some here in Washington, D.C. seem to have changed their minds about that. Over the next 10 years we are going to collect more than \$5.5 trillion more than we need. That is almost an unbelievable amount of money. It is more than we need to pay off our public debt, shore up Social Security, fix Medicare, implement the President's education plan, and cover just about every other reasonable expense we have. Even then we will have more than \$2.5 trillion left over.

It is almost unbelievable that some in this body think we should keep that money in the Treasury until we can find something else to spend it on. This money is not the government's money. We are not supposed to take more than we need. We are supposed to be legislators, not thieves. We need to give this money back to the taxpayers who paid it. We need to pass the President's tax cut plan, and we should do it quickly.

DEFICIT-BUSTING TAX CUT IS WRONG

(Ms. HARMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, during previous Congresses, I made many tough votes to balance our Federal budget with balanced priorities: I voted for the 1993 Clinton budget; I voted for Penny-Kasich, the first bipartisan effort to cut spending significantly; I voted for a constitutional amendment to balance our budget; and I voted for the 1997 balanced budget.

For my efforts, I received the Concord Coalition Deficit Hawk Award and four very close election victories. I have paid my dues on this issue, and I believe my votes have benefited all our constituents.

I rise today because tomorrow's vote on the first installment of a deficit-busting tax cut is wrong. It would benefit my family and me, but it is wrong. We need a budget first to make certain we pass tax cuts we can afford. We need a budget first to make certain we will pay off our debts in this decade, the best tax cut for all Americans.

CUT TAXES NOW

(Mr. KNOLLENBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, taxes today are at an all-time high as a percentage of our economy. The fact is the Federal Government is currently sucking up more of the American economy than it took to win World War II. That is simply wrong.

But that is not all. At the same time the Federal budget is running record-level surpluses, we are also experiencing the largest tax overpayment in history. That is not only wrong, it must be changed as soon as possible.

Tomorrow is the opportunity. Tomorrow, we consider H.R. 3, the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Act of 2001. This bill will increase fairness in the Tax Code, allow every American income taxpayer to keep more of their own money and provide support to our economy at the same time.

This is a historic opportunity. It is a proper reaction. It is the right thing to do, and I hope Members on both sides of the aisle will join me in voting for this responsible and much-needed tax relief.

CONGRESS SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT NARCOTICS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, every major city in America is experiencing booming heroin sales. Kids with eyes watering and noses running are running the streets and dangerous. Now, if that is not enough to scare the welcome wagon, our borders are wide open. Wide open big time.

While Congress is building halfway houses, narcoterrorists are coming across the border and treating it like a speed bump. Beam me up.

I yield back the fact that we are wasting billions and billions of dollars on a failed narcotics policy that could provide for a prescription drug program for every senior in America. Wise up Congress and let us really do something about narcotics.

TAX RELIEF FOR EVERYONE

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, the surplus means it is time for immediate across-the-board tax relief for all taxpayers to boost our economy, create jobs, and give Americans more confidence by returning some of their surplus taxes to help them get through these uncertain times. We need to cut taxes for every American, especially low-income families.

President Bush's tax plan will get the tax surplus out of Washington and back into the pockets of working men and women. The Republican Congress has united behind it. It is time that Americans get tax relief, sooner rather than later.